

BIRDS RECORDED IN 1950

Full details of the observations on the rarer birds are recorded in the log-book. The figures in parentheses show the numbers ringed.

Corvus corax. **Raven.**

Although only two occupied nests found it seems likely that four pairs were resident.

Corvus corone. **Carrion-Crow.**

Bred. Size of breeding population not known but probably small. The largest number recorded in spring, thirty, 6th April. Autumn passage first noted in early August with maxima of thirty-nine 19th September, forty-seven 8th October, and forty-three 15th October.

Corvus frugilegus. **Rook.**

A single bird on 30th May.

Corvus monedula. **Jackdaw.**

Recorded almost daily between 28th March and 2nd May with the largest number nineteen 6th April. Seen on five days in June. A flock of fifteen 3rd October, and single birds 17th, 20th, 21st and 22nd October, the only later records.

Sturnus vulgaris. **Starling.**

Seen on nine days between 24th March and 13th April, with nine 4th April the most. Four 2nd July and on six days between 23rd September and 8th October. Then almost daily from 10th October to end of season with evidence of considerable movement, the most seen being about seven hundred 23rd October and three hundred 1st November.

Chloris chloris. **Greenfinch.** (6)

Seen on twelve days between 5th April and 1st May. One 20th June. Then on twelve days between 20th September and end of season but numbers always small.

Carduelis carduelis. **Goldfinch.** (3)

Seen on five days between 12th April and 1st May. Ten records between 10th October and end of season with five 28th October and six 6th November the most.

Carduelis flammea cabaret. **Lesser Redpoll.**

One 29th September and two Redpolls on 27th October were probably of this race.

Carduelis cannabina. **Linnet.** (1)

No estimate of breeding population but probably larger than in preceding years. First seen 3rd April, then daily till end of October. Passage noted 6th to 8th April and on many days in autumn with about two hundred and seventy 22nd August the most. Seen on only two days between 1st and 9th November.

Pyrrhula pyrrhula. **Bullfinch.**

One on 1st November. There are only two or three other recent records.

Fringilla coelebs. **Chaffinch.** (13)

Breeding population not determined. Little evidence of passage in spring but considerable movement evident in the latter half of October and early November. Maxima on 17th, 22nd and 26th October and 5th November.

Fringilla montifringilla. **Brambling.**

One on 25th October and one from 27th to 31st October.

Emberiza citrinella. **Yellow Bunting.**

Single birds 6th, 7th, 17th, 20th, 21st, 29th, 30th April and 1st May.

Emberiza cirrus. **Girl Bunting.**

One 12th April.

Emberiza hortulana. **Ortolan Bunting.**

One on 5th October, probably a first winter bird. The third record for the Island.

Calcarius lapponicus. **Lapland Bunting.**

Two on 29th September and one 'probable' on 25th October.

Plectrophenax nivalis. **Snow Bunting.**

One seen on six days between 16th and 24th September. Then on eleven days between 2nd October and end of season. The most thirty-two 11th October, twenty-eight 12th October, and forty-two 9th November.

Passer domesticus. **House Sparrow.**

F. W. Gade reported one in Millcombe on 9th April. The first record since 1947.

Lullula arborea. **Wood-Lark.**

One seen in Tillage Field on 18th October. The first record for the Island.

Alauda arvensis. **Skylark.** (1)

Breeding population not determined. Little passage recorded in spring. In autumn considerable migration evident in late September and October especially 23rd September, 28th to 30th and 16th October.

Anthus campestris. **Tawny Pipit.**

One on 6th and 7th October. An addition to the Island list.

Anthus trivialis. **Tree Pipit.**

Spring records: two 4th April, one 6th and 7th April, two 2nd May. In August one 3rd, two 6th, one 16th, one 3rd September.

Anthus pratensis. **Meadow Pipit.** (26)

No estimate of breeding population. Considerable migration evident from 20th to 30th September (especially 24th), between 9th and 11th October, and on 15th and 16th October. Numbers much reduced after the middle of October.

Anthus spinoletta. **Rock Pipit.**

No satisfactory estimate of breeding population but birds seen in all months.

Motacilla flava. **Yellow Wagtail.**

Considerably fewer records than in previous years. Three 30th August and single birds 2nd and 5th September and 1st October the only records.

Motacilla cinerea. **Grey Wagtail.**

One 25th March the only spring record. Three 19th September. Then seen on five of the days remaining in September and on nine days in October.

Motacilla alba. **Pied Wagtail.**

No residents. Seen on one day in March, six in April, one in May, one in June, three in July. Then almost daily from 29th August to 8th October and on eight of the days remaining to the end of the season. The most recorded thirteen on 14th September and twenty-one on 21st September. Two of the spring records referred to *alba*, but as most of the birds in autumn were juveniles little distinction between the two forms was possible.

Certhia familiaris. **Tree-Creeper.** (1)

One seen 18th July and, what was probably the same bird, on 27th July. One trapped at the Old Light on 23rd October. These are the first records for the Island.

Parus major. **Great Tit.**

One 10th, 11th and 12th April.

Parus caeruleus. **Blue Tit.**

Seen on thirteen days between 27th March and 13th April; six on 7th April the most. A single bird in Millcombe 4th, 5th and 8th June, the only other record.

Parus ater. **Coal Tit.**

One 12th and 13th April.

Muscicapa striata. **Spotted Flycatcher.** (3)

No spring records. One 24th July. Seen on most days between 4th August and 20th September, with maxima of nine 13th and 16th August and c. ten 31st August. In October single birds 5th, 6th and 12th; two 13th and single birds 15th, 16th and 17th. All these October records are unusually late for this species.

Muscicapa hypoleuca. **Pied Flycatcher.** (3)

Two 1st May. One 14th August and three 16th August. Then almost daily from 22nd August to 21st September, the most being twelve 22nd and 31st August, and thirteen 3rd September. A number of unusually late records in October: single birds on 5th, 8th, 13th, 16th and 21st, and two on 6th, 12th, 15th and 22nd.

As last year the correspondence between the movements of the two Flycatchers was marked even in the remarkably late October records for both species. However, this year, the numbers of Spotted were considerably less than last year and were on several occasions exceeded by those of Pied.

Muscicapa parva. **The Red-Breasted Flycatcher.**

One, probably immature, on 20th October. An addition to the Island list.

Regulus regulus. **Goldcrest.** (1)

One 12th April. Almost daily from 4th September to end of season: the most fourteen on 29th September, eighteen 6th October and ten 27th and 28th October.

Regulus ignicapillus. **Firecrest.**

One in Millcombe, 5th, 6th and 7th September.

Phylloscopus collybita. **Chiffchaff.**

Spring passage recorded on sixteen days between 23rd March and 21st April: most recorded c. ten on 1st April and c. fifteen on 6th April. A few seen during August and September and most of the phylloscopids seen after 20th September were ascribed to this form. Main passage ended 6th October, but stragglers seen until 29th October (five on 15th October).

Phylloscopus trochilus. **Willow-Warbler.** (55)

No evidence of breeding. First recorded 31st March and seen regularly until 2nd May with maxima 7th, 12th, 13th, 17th and 21st April. Two records of single birds in June. Then seen regularly from 24th July until about 20th September. Numbers were always comparatively small except for 7th and 13th August.

Phylloscopus sibilatrix. **Wood-Warbler.**

Two on 17th April the only record.

Phylloscopus inornatus. **Yellow-Browed Warbler.** (1)

One seen 15th October and, what was probably the same bird, taken in the Quarry trap 22nd October.

Locustella naevia. **Grasshopper-Warbler.**

Two on 29th September.

Acrocephalus scirpaceus. **Reed-Warbler.**

One trapped at the Quarry 6th October.

Acrocephalus schaenobaenus. **Sedge-Warbler.**

No spring records. First recorded 6th August and seen subsequently on eleven days to 20th September. All records are of single birds except two on 22nd August.

Sylvia atricapilla. **Blackcap.**

All October records : one 12th, four 16th, one 26th and one 28th.

Sylvia communis. **Whitethroat.** (1)

One pair probably bred in Millcombe. No nest was found but birds were seen carrying food on several occasions. One 20th April the first record. Seen fairly regularly during June and July. Autumn passage first evident 13th August and birds seen on many days until 5th October. Most seen were eight 13th August, about fifteen 31st August and sixteen 29th September.

Sylvia curruca. **Lesser Whitethroat.**

One 5th September, two 19th and 20th September and one 21st, two 10th October.

Turdus pilaris. **Fieldfare.**

Eight 23rd and 24th March, two 29th and 30th. Single birds 2nd, 4th and 5th April. Three 10th September, a very early record, and then seen regularly from 22nd October to end of season with considerable numbers after 3rd November (seventy-five 5th November the most).

Turdus viscivorus. **Mistle Thrush.**

One 31st March.

Turdus ericetorum. **Song-Thrush.** (3)

Bred : probably two pairs. Passage noted from 19th September but numbers small until about 20th October : c. twenty 20th October the most.

Turdus musicus. **Redwing.** (1)

One 10th April the only spring record. Considerable movement evident from 20th October to end of season, with 'peaks' on 22nd October and 6th November.

Turdus torquatus. **Ring Ouzel.**

Seen on all except two days between 4th April and 13th, four 4th and five 12th being the most. Two 30th April and 1st May. In autumn two 17th and 23rd September, eight 27th, two 28th, four 29th and single birds 30th, 1st and 2nd October, six 16th October, one 22nd, 23rd, 28th and three 29th.

Turdus merula. **Blackbird.** (25)

No estimate of breeding population. Little evidence of spring passage. In autumn passage evident from 19th September (perhaps earlier) to end of season. Maxima thirty-six 29th September, c. seventy-five 23rd October, c. fifty 29th October and c. forty 5th November.

Oenanthe oenanthe. **Wheatear.** (2)

No satisfactory estimate of breeding population. First seen 25th March and passage recorded until early May: the most c. twenty 30th March and c. twenty-five 5th April. Autumn passage first noted about 20th July and continued to 26th October. Maxima noted on 13th, 27th to 31st August, 25th, 30th September. Several of those seen in Spring were ascribed to the form *leucorrhoa* and in autumn both birds trapped and one found dead were of this form, indeed it seems likely that most of the autumn birds were *leucorrhoa*.

Saxicola rubetra. **Whinchat.** (1)

One 31st July, single birds 1st, 2nd, 5th, 7th September, two (one trapped) 10th and one 20th and 28th September.

Saxicola torquata. **Stonechat.** (1)

One 4th and 5th September. Then seen regularly, but in small numbers from 20th September to 3rd November. The most, five 28th September, six 5th and 19th October.

Phoenicurus phoenicurus. **Redstart.**

One 1st May and two 2nd May the only spring records. Only three autumn records, all of single birds, on 10th, 16th and 29th September.

Phoenicurus ochrurus. **Black Redstart.** (1)

No spring records. In autumn one 20th October, three 21st, and single birds 28th, 29th October, 1st and 5th November.

Erithacus rubecula. **Robin.** (2)

Breeding population probably three pairs. Passage noted 20th and 31st August, and on several days in September and October, principally 4th, 23rd, 29th and 30th September, 10th and 22nd October.

Prunella modularis. **Hedge Sparrow.**

Breeding population not known. Birds seen in all months although very few records in June. Some evidence of migration 29th September 16th October and possibly during the last week in October.

Troglodytes troglodytes. **Wren.** (4)

No estimate of breeding population. Little evidence of movement but a slight increase noted about 21st July and probably some passage in the latter part of October.

Hirundo rustica. **Swallow.**

First seen 5th April, and peak of spring passage noted on 13th April. Recorded regularly till 3rd August but only seen on five days between then and 28th August; subsequently recorded almost daily until 23rd October. Maxima noted on 29th August, 10th, 20th, 29th September and 14th October. A late bird seen 3rd and 4th November.

Delichon urbica. **House Martin.**

First recorded 13th April and seen fairly regularly till 7th July. One 20th and 22nd August; one 15th September; five 20th September. Then seen almost daily to 3rd October but abundant only on 29th September. Three 7th October, two 8th and one 23rd the only later records.

Riparia riparia. **Sand Martin.**

First recorded 25th March and seen fairly regularly until early May. Numbers small except for 7th and 17th April. Recorded on six days in the latter half of June and then seen regularly to 29th September with single birds 6th and 18th October and three or four 24th October the last records. Numbers in autumn always small with about twenty-five 29th and 30th September the most.

Apus apus. **Swift.**

First recorded 30th April and seen fairly regularly until 28th August. One 3rd September, three 4th and 5th, one 6th the last records. Greatest numbers noted on 19th June and 13th and 30th July.

Caprimulgus europaeus. **Nightjar.**

Two 20th August.

Upupa epops. **Hoopoe.**

One 26th March, one in Millcombe from 7th to 10th April and Miss Evans reports one at the North End on 3rd June.

Cuculus canorus. **Cuckoo.**

First recorded 21st April. Seen on eleven days in June and six in July but as most of these records were of juvenile birds it seems very likely that a few birds bred. Fifteen records in August are all of single birds except for two on the 1st and 5th. Last recorded 3rd September.

Asio flammeus. **Short-Eared Owl.**

One on 31st March and 3rd April and one 22nd and 23rd October.

Falco peregrinus. **Peregrine.**

A pair bred at the Gannet's Combe eyrie and two juveniles were seen outside the nesting crevice on 20th June. Birds seen in all months.

Falco subbuteo. **Hobby.**

One over Benjamin's Chair 29th September. This is the fourth recent record.

Falco columbarius. **Merlin.**

One spring record and several in autumn. Single birds 9th April, 19th August, 25th and 26th September, two 22nd October, and single birds 29th, 30th, 31st October, 3rd, 4th, 5th November.

Falco tinnunculus. **Kestrel.**

Bred this year on the cliffs between the Quarter-Wall and the Sugar-Loaf. Although no nest was found, F. W. Gade reports seeing a kestrel driving a Raven away from that area and on 23rd July both parents and three juveniles were seen there and the female parent was observed to feed one of the juveniles. Seen in all months and almost daily from 11th June to the end of season, seven 22nd August the most seen.

Buteo buteo. **Common Buzzard.**

Two pairs nested at Tibbett's Point and near to Seal's Hole. Birds seen on most days throughout the season.

Circus pyrgus. **Montagu's Harrier.**

A juvenile seen 12th August in various parts of the Island. The specific identification is based on a light patch at the nape, the clear white rump and the unstreaked reddish underparts.

Accipiter nisus. **Sparrow Hawk.**

Single birds 6th, 13th, 30th April, 21st, 25th, 28th July, 5th, 9th, 10th, 12th and 25th September. Then on eleven days in October with two on the 15th. One 4th November.

Ardea cinerea. **Common Heron.**

Three 28th July flying past the Old Light and one 13th September on the beach near to Tibbett's Point.

Anas crecca. **Teal.**

Single birds 10th August, 16th and 27th September; a flock of thirteen 27th October, three 28th and 29th.

Anas penelope. **Wigeon.**

One 29th September and one 6th October.

Melanitta nigra. **Common Scoter.**

One near to the Quarry Beach 26th September.

Phalacrocorax phalacrocorax. **Cormorant.**

Only three pairs bred on Gannet's Rock this year. Birds seen in all months and some evidence of passage in mid-April and in August and September. Few records in October and none in November.

Phalacrocorax aristotelis. **Shag.** (4)

Breeding population about thirty-seven pairs. Birds seen in all months but very few seen after the end of September.

Sula bassana. **Gannet.**

Seen in all months but numbers small except for several days in September and early October.

Hydrobates pelagicus. **Storm-Petrel.**

A flock of about ten seen during the crossing from Bideford on 17th April. Remains of a bird, identified by the wing measurement and characteristic smell, found on the top of the island in June.

Puffinus puffinus. **Manx Shearwater.** (6)

First heard in late March and last record three seen off shore 23rd September. Large numbers seen off shore on several days during June and July.

Puffinus puffinus mauretanicus. **Balearic Shearwater.**

Two reported on crossing to Bideford 6th September; a new record for the Island. For further details see elsewhere in this report.

Puffinus gravis. **Great Shearwater.**

One, possibly two, 20th April and two 21st seen in area of Landing Bay. Two seen on crossing to Bideford 6th September.

Fulmarus glacialis. **Fulmar.** (2)

Breeding again attempted at Jenny's Cove and Gannet's Rock. Number of eggs laid at former site not exactly determined but at least four, and two chicks appeared to have fledged successfully. At Gannet's Rock three eggs were laid, and two chicks were fledged. Birds last seen 24th August save for one seen on crossing from Ilfracombe on 13th September. Most recorded thirty-five 5th April.

A dark bird was again present at Gannet's Rock and was believed to be the same bird as frequented the site last year.

Columba palumbus. **Wood-Pigeon.**

Breeding not proved but probably took place. Seen in all months except November but only three records in October. Nine 23rd and 30th September the most.

Streptopelia turtur. **Turtle-Dove.**

First recorded 4th June when eight were seen by Miss D. S. Evans. Ten other records in June and one on 2nd July. On autumn passage single birds seen 22nd, 23rd August, 15th, 27th September and 5th October.

Numenius arquata. **Common Curlew.**

One pair bred this year: F. W. Gade found a nest with four eggs in the Southern arm of the Punchbowl Valley. Recorded in all months with nineteen 11th April the most in spring and twenty-one 10th August the most in autumn. Little seen in October or November.

Numenius phaeopus. **Whimbrel.**

First seen 21st and 30th April: two seen 10th June and 2nd July and eleven further records in July. Seen regularly in August and September with eighteen 28th August the most. Six 9th October the last record.

Scolopax rusticola. **Woodcock.**

Six records, all in autumn. Two 10th October and single birds 18th, 23rd, 25th, 28th October, and 2nd November.

Capella gallinago. **Common Snipe.**

Seen occasionally in all months except May but only two records in June, one in July and two in August.

Lymnocyptes minimus. **Jack Snipe.**

One seen 16th September and one 9th October.

Arenaria interpres. **Turnstone.**

Five 1st May, one 28th August, two 5th September, one 9th and 10th, one 16th October. F. W. Gade reports six 19th November.

Calidris alpina. **Dunlin.**

One 21st April, three 1st May, one 25th June, a party of fifteen seen on crossing 30th August, one 2nd September and 30th, two 1st and 2nd October.

Calidris melanotos. **American Pectoral Sandpiper.**

One seen on air-field at a small temporary pond on 12th October ; the first record for the Island. For further details see elsewhere in the report.

Crocethia alba. **Sanderling.**

One near Rocket Pond 17th September.

Actitis hypoleucos. **Common Sandpiper.**

One 6th July, eight 25th, one 2nd August and two 3rd, three 7th September and one 9th.

Tringa glareola. **Wood-Sandpiper.**

One, probably of this species, 16th September.

Tringa ochropus. **Green Sandpiper.**

One 9th and 10th September.

Tringa nebularia. **Greenshank.**

One seen 3rd, 4th and 5th July.

Charadrius hiaticula. **Ringed Plover.**

One 21st July the only record.

Pluvialis apricaria. **Golden Plover.**

Four 8th April, five 11th and one 21st, one 8th, 9th and 10th September. Then seen regularly from 21st September to 24th October, seventeen 12th October the most. One 29th October the last record.

Vanellus vanellus. **Lapwing.** (6)

Seven pairs probably bred but only four nests found. Evidence of passage in late October ; forty-five seen 21st October, sixty-three 22nd, one hundred and thirty-eight 23rd, about one hundred 28th and fifty 31st. These are the largest numbers yet recorded for this species.

Haematopus ostralegus. **Oyster Catcher.** (2)

Breeding population not determined. Recorded in all months except November, but infrequently during late October. A flock of about forty birds seen on 31st August was probably of this species; otherwise the most seen was twenty-eight on 11th September.

Sterna sandvicensis. **Sandwich Tern.**

One 10th April and two 11th in the Landing Bay. An addition to the Island list.

Sterna hirundo or *macrura*. **Common or Arctic Tern.**

Seven 22nd September and one 24th. In neither of these cases could any distinction be drawn between *s. hirundo* and *s. macrura*.

Sterna albifrons. **Little Tern.**

One, in company with the birds mentioned immediately above, 22nd September.

Larus ridibundus. **Black-Headed Gull.**

Several records all of single birds: 4th April, 21st June, 4th and 21st July, 27th September.

Larus argentatus. **Herring Gull.** (390)

No estimate of the breeding population of this Gull or of the next two species. Numbers very much reduced after mid-September but they appeared to increase slightly again in early November.

Larus fuscus. **Lesser Black-Backed Gull.** (11)

Seen in all months but numbers much reduced in August and no records after 9th October.

Larus marinus. **Great Black-Backed Gull.** (8)

Recorded in all months. The numbers seen in September appeared to be well in excess of the breeding population but after mid-October very few were seen.

Larus glaucoides. **Iceland Gull.**

One 5th April, seen in company with both Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls so that comparison of size was possible. The bird appeared to be about the same size as the Herring Gulls.

Rissa tridactyla. **Kittiwake.** (68)

Figures for the breeding season given elsewhere. Last nestlings two in Kittiwake Gully 31st August. By this date few adults were left at the Breeding colonies. Several records of birds seen off shore during mid-September with about two hundred and fifty 17th September the most.

Alca torda. **Razorbill.** (82)

No estimate of breeding population. Several pairs appeared to be nesting on the cliffs to the South of Quarry Beach this year. Although no eggs or chicks were found there, birds were present

throughout the breeding season. This would appear to be a fresh colony. All chicks had left the ledges by the second week in August and there are only a few later records, all of odd birds seen in shore.

Uria aalge. **Guillemot**. (122)

First seen on ledges in large numbers 7th April. First chicks seen 29th June; most birds gone from the cliffs by the end of July but odd birds seen in shore until the end of September.

Fratercula arctica. **Puffin**. (2)

No estimate of entire breeding population but that of Puffin Slope probably less than 400 pairs. First seen on land 1st April; all had left by the end of July and there is only one later record, of a single bird seen 26th September off the East Coast.

Alle alle. **Little Auk**.

The remains of one found above Pilot's Quay, 30th June.

Crex crex. **Corn Crake**.

One seen 17th, 18th and 30th April, one 4th June, two birds that were probably of this species 16th August.

Rallus aquaticus. **Water-Rail**.

No spring records. One 23rd September; then seen almost daily from 9th October to end of season with five on 29th October and four on 1st November the most.

Gallinula chloropus. **Moorhen**.

One seen by Pondsburry, 14th June.

Phasianus colchicus. **Pheasant**.

Three broods of young seen. Largest number noted, seven 6th, 15th and 19th October, but the actual population is probably well in excess of this figure.

SHORT NOTES ON SELECTED SPECIES

Tawny Pipit. The bird seen on 6th and 7th October first drew attention to itself by its clear and distinctive flight note. When seen at fairly close quarters the sandy upperparts and almost unstreaked underparts were clearly seen and the general resemblance in shape to a Wagtail was very striking. This species has rarely been recorded outside Sussex.

Tree-Creeper. The bird seen on 27th July was on an overhanging cliff-face to the north of the Devil's Slide. It was behaving in a typical manner ascending the cliff in a series of short jerks then flying down to the bottom and ascending again. As far as could be ascertained it appeared to be feeding on *Petrobius* which is to be found on the cliffs in considerable abundance. This habitat preference is somewhat surprising as the bird seen on the 18th was amongst the trees in Millcombe and may well have been the same bird.